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Articles in Today's Clips

Friday, February 1, 2008

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Richard Spangler, 40, has been with district since '96

By Rebecca Trylch

HARRISON (WJRT) -- (01/31/08)--A 12-year-old Clare County girl is saying her Harrison Middle School math teacher crossed the line. Thursday that teacher was facing child abuse and lewd conduct charges.

The 40-year-old teacher went before a judge and was formally charged with the crimes.

The accused teacher is Richard Spangler. He's been with the Harrison School District since 1996.

Spangler was put on paid administrative leave back in October after a 12-year-old girl complained that he made her uncomfortable and made inappropriate comments to her during math class.

[Story continues below](#)

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She told her mother in September that Spangler looked down her shirt and dropped a pencil down her shirt.

Once the complaint was made, the Michigan State Police out of Mount Pleasant began investigating, along with the school.

Police say several other students backed up the girl's story. The investigation led to Spangler's arrest Wednesday night at his Lake City home.

Thursday morning he appeared in the 80th District Court, where he was formally charged with second-degree child abuse and lewd conduct.

The child abuse charge is a felony, and Spangler could face up to four years in prison. Right now he is free on bond.

The superintendent for Harrison schools say he's glad the situation is being taken care of.

Earlier this month, Spangler resigned from Harrison Middle School, but will remain on the payroll until the end of the school year.

-
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HOUSE PASSES ENHANCED PENALTIES FOR LEAVING KIDS IN CARS

Gongwer News Service

Jan. 31, 2008

People who leave kids under the age of six in a car unattended would face harsher criminal penalties under [HB 4872](#) and [HB 4873](#), passed by the House unanimously on Thursday.

"Sadly, in Michigan we've had instances where children were seriously harmed after being left alone in a vehicle while mom or dad went to a movie theater or shopping. We must empower our law enforcement officials and judges with the statutory authority to punish people who put vulnerable children in these types of unreasonably risky situations," said [Rep. Fran Amos](#) (R-Waterford), one of the bill sponsors.

The legislation effects situations where a child is left in a car unattended for an unreasonable length of time or under circumstances which pose an unreasonable risk of harm or injury.

Individuals would be charged with a misdemeanor if a child was unharmed, but felony penalties would be levied for up to 10 years if serious physical harm occurred to the child or up to 15 years if the child died.

Michigan e-Store Gets a New Look

Jan 31, 2008, News Report

The Michigan Department of Information Technology (MDIT) yesterday announced the launch of a new and improved Web site, dubbed the [Michigan e-Store](#). The Michigan e-Store has a new look and feel that will be more appealing to shoppers said the state in a release. Products have been reorganized into easy to find categories, with new featured products and sale items. The Michigan e-Store also provides several opportunities to make important tax deductible donations that support critical state programs and services. Gift certificates are also available.

"Shoppers will find it easier to find the government products they are searching for," said Ken Theis, director of the Michigan Department of Information Technology. "Whether it's a state park motor vehicle permit or a DVD about the Mackinac Bridge, they'll find it at the Michigan e-Store."

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) sells several books, patches, posters, prints and videos with proceeds going directly to the management, protection and research of Michigan's endangered, threatened and nongame species and their habitats. Proceeds from the sale of MDNR state park motor vehicle permits and boating access permits are the major funding source for operations, maintenance and improvements to those sites.

The Children's Trust Fund sells several products ideal for gifts, which support the important mission of child abuse prevention programs facilitated statewide. One of the e-Store's latest additions, the Michigan Department of Transportation's "Our Bridge at 50" DVD, celebrates the 50th anniversary of Michigan's iconic Mackinac Bridge.

The website is secured by 128 bit Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption. Information about the products and the causes they support is readily available on the e-Store site.


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News

Giving up her badge, gun

By JOHN EBY / Dowagiac Daily News
Thursday, January 31, 2008 9:53 AM EST

Officer Susan Skibbe-Worley will soon trade one DHS for another.

Instead of Dowagiac High School, from which she graduated in 1989, DHS will mean the state Department of Human Services.

Feb. 11 she becomes a Berrien County Child Protective Services (CPS) worker in Benton Harbor.

"Coming from law enforcement, I'm already tough enough to separate emotions and I know the foster care system. One of the things I miss the most was doing Holiday Hope Chests in Girl Power for foster care kids. We need so many foster care homes," she said Wednesday afternoon.

At 29 in March 2000, she became the Elks' youngest Citizen of the Year since Olympic wrestler Chris Taylor in 1973-1974.

Skibbe-Worley won't miss wearing her cumbersome bulletproof vest or removing her gunbelt to use the bathroom.

Instead, she looks forward to trading in her uniform for "real clothes. I have a reason to shop again."

"I never liked carrying a gun," she said. "I always thought it would be nice to be a Bobby. I never had a gun pointed at me. I've pointed a gun at people, but I never had to shoot anybody. I never fired my gun except in training."

Being a detective for the past year after about seven years starting in 1999 as the public relations face of the police department as the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer and instructing 30 to 60 females in Girl Power at Patrick Hamilton Middle School, fulfilled a lifelong dream.

"Cop work is 24/7, 365 days a year," she said, including nights.



1989 DUHS graduate Susan Skibbe-Worley will leave the Dowagiac Police Department Feb. 11 to become a Berrien County Child Protective Services (CPS) worker in Benton Harbor.

With two children, Matthew, 9 this month, and Madison, 3 in December, the Pokagon Township resident began to feel like "babysitters had my kids more than I did."

"It's going to be weird not to have 'Officer' in front of my name, but this is 9 to 5, holidays and weekends off. I'll be on-call, but you can rotate and set up a schedule more conducive to family life. It's a pay cut for me initially because I have to start all over at the bottom of the scale, but eventually supersedes what I make here. I'm at the top of the scale here. I can't go any farther. I never could envision 30 years in the same job, let alone 30 years in law enforcement. I always envisioned myself out of here by 45 and moving on to a teaching career. When I was little, I wanted to be a beautician," like her "thin and pretty" aunt.

Skibbe-Worley, 37, joined the city force Sept. 13, 1995, four days after her birthday. In a "Britney moment," she cut her long hair short to wear her hat.

Hired by four-year Chief Gary Dumeney after a stint at the Cass County Sheriff's Office, she credits Chief Tom Atkinson, who came home from Cassopolis in August 1997, with making the department a better fit with the community it serves.

"What's nice about our department now is you've got myself, Dave Davis, who's from Dowagiac, (Dan) Wiggins and (Jarrid) Bradford. Jerid (Ostrom) is from Niles. Steve (Grinnwald) is more from the Kalamazoo area, but lives in Decatur. Steve, Jerid and I hired in within two weeks of each other. Steve first. Jerid has one day seniority on me. Even the chief is a local guy and that serves this community much better."

With the county she did dispatch and corrections. She's been a road officer, a community policing officer, a detective and is now back on the road.

"I've done it all," Skibbe-Worley laughed. "Let's face it. The only thing that would keep me here is the lieutenant's position and (Steve Harrison) isn't ever going to retire. I've always loved law enforcement. I think I stayed this long because of the title. It was a kick being Officer Somebody. There weren't any females growing up. I'm the second this department ever had. Poor (Stacey) Bazan, she gets confused for me."

"I get that a lot," that some people didn't realize she was still with the department while assigned to the Cass County Drug Enforcement Team.

Since she also taught RAD self-defense classes for children and adults, she considered becoming a teacher, but ruled out law, even though it was former Union High law teacher Mark Binder who inspired her career choice and told her she would make an excellent attorney.

"If I have to look back at everything I've done in my career as a police officer, I enjoyed (teaching), although it eventually burned me out. I was tired after seven years. Working the road, working drugs, you know how many of my students I saw? It was really disheartening. The girls are the ones who bother me the most. A lot of them are pregnant and I think, 'Man, they just didn't listen. Did I not do a good enough job?' "

The May 1993 Ferris State University graduate agonized about that, but then Skibbe-Worley would bump into someone at the gas station who missed her or she'd pick out her products when the top 10 graduates list was posted each spring and feel consoled.

Stepping back from that aspect of her career Skibbe-Worley still regrets because she knew she would not be replaced, but she had started to feel, "I spend so much time working with everybody else's kids, I don't have any energy left for my own. I knew then it was time to make a change, and being a detective was something I wanted to do for me."

She is the daughter of Lester and Diane Skibbe of Sink Road.

Her father farmed. Her mother is an accountant and the longtime secretary of the Cass County Fair Board.

"My mom was not happy at all," Skibbe-Worley recalls. "Your little girl comes home and says, 'I want to be a police officer,' was not exactly what she wanted to hear."

"You want to talk about life coming full circle, the other night I was working with Wiggins. It struck me I'm his Jimmy Mosier. When I was in high school and did the ride-along program, I rode with Jimmy Mosier, then worked with him here until he retired. I was in charge of that program when Dan was an intern, which makes me feel old."

A "pack rat," she said she still has bags of stuff her students made her, such as drawings.

"I'd feel weird to throw it away," except she averaged 175 to 200 DARE students a year for seven years.

"Ryan Laylin is a reserve now over at Cass County and he was here (at DPD). He was in the first DARE group I taught, so I did kind of become Mark Binder, too."

She even started a master's degree program with the late Ken Dockerty, but abandoned it to adopt Madison.

The school system is closing McKinley Elementary School, which she attended from 1976-1981. "I'm heartbroken in a way," she said.

She serves on the Fitch Camp board and runs to relieve stress.

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Today is National Earned Income Tax Credit Day in Michigan

by: [wizardkitten](#)
Thu Jan 31, 2008 at 09:43:06 AM EST

Surprised they gave this its own "day", but it is a great way to raise awareness that it's out there and lower income folks should be [encouraged to take this credit](#) on their tax returns.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm has proclaimed Jan. 31 as Earned Income Tax Credit Day in Michigan.

"The Internal Revenue Services estimates that more than \$300 million in Earned Income Tax Credits goes unclaimed by low-income taxpayers in Michigan," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. "The Earned Income Tax Credit is a proven anti-poverty tool that makes the difference for Michigan's working families.

For the 2007 tax season - depending on a person's income and number of dependents - the federal EITC can reach a maximum of:

- \$4,716 for families with two or more children.
- \$2,853 for families with one child.
- \$428 for taxpayers with no children.

And don't forget Michigan's new EITC that gives back based on a percentage of the federal.

Michigan enacted a state earned income tax credit in 2006 that becomes effective during the 2008 tax season. Under the agreement, working families are eligible to receive a percentage of the federal EITC, starting with 10 percent for 2008 and increasing to up to 20 percent in 2009.

Yes, this is the credit that [Nancy Cassis threw a fit about](#), but apparently Nancy has had a change of heart. Bet you never thought you would hear her say [something like this](#)-

"With the Legislature giving tax check rebates to some of our biggest corporations, among them the Big Three, it seems only fair and right to give credit checks to the other end of the spectrum, our working poor," she said.

Hell has officially frozen over. Honest, that was Nancy Cassis when the MCC pointed out that it would [cost the state far less](#) than previously indicated.

Here's Mark Schauer's [statement of support](#) of EITC Day-

"These are exactly the type of targeted tax incentives that reward and encourage hard work and we should make sure

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everyone who qualifies takes advantage of them," said Schauer, who fought for the recently enacted state version of the EITC. "At a time when Washington is finally waking up to the plight of struggling workers and considering an economic stimulus package, we must make the most of this powerful economic tool."

Go to this [webpage for information](#) on how to claim the credit, or you can call 211 and ask for assistance.

wizardkitten :: Today is National Earned Income Tax Credit Day in Michigan

Tags: (All Tags)

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Today is National Earned Income Tax Credit Day in Michigan | 4 comments

Shocked! (4.00 / 2)

Nancy Cassis actually said that? What happened? Did she get a heart transplant or something?

by: *Kathy @ Thu Jan 31, 2008 at 10:08:14 AM CST*

I'm starting to think (4.00 / 2)

Someone is slipping something in the coffee over at the Capitol. All this new-found concern on the part of the Senate Pubs is a bit bizarre.

by: *wizardkitten @ Thu Jan 31, 2008 at 10:49:20 AM CST*
[Parent]

Hmm... (4.00 / 2)

I'm beginning to think they've received a lot of unflattering mail from their constituents lately and it has them scared they might end up on unemployment.

by: *Kathy @ Thu Jan 31, 2008 at 11:12:57 AM CST*
[Parent]

Me too ... (0.00 / 0)

by: *Pastor John @ Fri Feb 01, 2008 at 00:30:52 AM CST*
[Parent]

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THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

'Gold for Food' brings \$13,000

Oral surgeon's effort continues

Friday, February 01, 2008

From News staff reports

Dr. Fredric Bonine's "Gold for Food" program brought more than \$13,000 last year for Gleaners Community Food Bank.

Bonine, a Brighton oral surgeon, raises money from the recycling of extracted teeth with dental crowns and bridges. Over 12 years of the program Bonine and his staff have donated almost \$30,000.

In early 2007, Bonine and his staff expanded the program with the focus to include informational packets about Gleaners to be distributed to patients who donate their extracted crown work, outlining the Gold for Food program and including a tax-deductible donation form that can be used by the patient to receive a tax deduction.

The program was introduced to the Livingston County dentists at a recent Livingston County District Dental Society meeting and a check was presented to Gleaners.

In addition, a donation of \$500 from smelter Atlantic Precious Metals also was made.

For the year ahead, nearly 30 area dentists and oral surgeons have signed up to participate.

"During this tough time, when everyone including local small businesses are struggling, this is one example of how a small group of caring individuals can think outside the box to feed their hungry neighbors," said Erica Karfonta, Gleaners director in Livingston County.

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Foster Care

Provide a safe haven for a child -- be a foster parent!
We will help you get licensed and provide ongoing training and support.

Foster parents provide temporary care for boys and girls of all races and religions, from birth to age 18. More than 18,000 Michigan children are in foster care because their birth families cannot provide a safe and secure home. It's beyond their control and it's never their fault!



Many but not all children in foster care are receiving therapy for moderate to severe emotional and behavioral problems due to abuse, neglect and/or separation from their families.

Our Lansing and Detroit offices also offer refugee foster care, helping children and teens from other countries who arrive in the United States without an adult to care for them.



Contact one of our foster care office locations to request more information about becoming a foster parent. **We are recruiting new foster parents everywhere, but especially in Saginaw, where our program is expanding.**

- [Metro Detroit](#)
- [Ann Arbor](#)
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HELP A TEEN in LSSM's Supervised Independent Living Program

Rent a room -- or be a mentor

FOSTER CARE FOR REFUGEE YOUTH

Learn how you can [help a teen or young adult](#) who has fled from war, violence or persecution in another country and arrived in the United States with no adults to turn to for support.

Frequently Asked Questions

[What is foster care?](#)
[How can I help?](#)
[What kind of children are in foster care?](#)
[What do foster parents do?](#)
[Can I have a job outside the home?](#)
[What kind of financial support would I get?](#)

[What is foster care?](#)

Foster care is a service provided to children who have been removed from their home because of risk of neglect or abuse. Foster families provide 24-hour care to children and help birth parents and children work towards family reunification. LSSM staff provide support, and the local family court reviews progress regularly.

[How can I help?](#)

By becoming a foster parent, you can provide a safe, stable environment for a child, reduce the risk of further harm and promote family reunification. You can give children the love and attention they deserve when they are away from their birth parents.

[What kind of children are in foster care?](#)

Children in foster care range from newborns to age 18. They come from many racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Youth leaving the foster care system at age 18 need rooms to rent with caring families. Can you provide a room in your home? You will not be a foster parent -- just a positive role model who can show how life really works.

Teens also need mentors to help them learn how to make it on their own. If you can meet with a young person for two to four hours every month, you can be a mentor. You must be: at least 18 years old, a positive role model for youth and willing to submit to a criminal check



Learn more about being a host or mentor:

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Some have never had a stable home. Some but not all children may have emotional, behavioral and medical problems, including aggressiveness, bedwetting, defiance, lack of motivation, anger and depression.

What do foster parents do?

Foster parents are 24-hour caregivers. They provide food, shelter, clothing and emotional support for the child. They are required to give the child the opportunity for recreation and social interaction. They must transport the child to appointments, doctor visits and school. Foster parents must also attend ongoing training classes and participate in monthly visits with caseworkers.

Can I have a job outside the home?

Many foster parents have "outside" jobs as well. In such cases, foster children are treated just like the family's own children. When the parents are at work, the children may be in school, at a day care center, or with another family member or babysitter.

What kind of financial support would I get?

Foster parents receive reimbursement every month to provide food, clothing and other things their foster children need. The amount depends on the needs of the child. Foster parents also receive a clothing allowance for foster children twice a year.



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Count `puts a face' on homeless: Annual survey done at area sites

Friday, February 01, 2008

BY CHRIS KILLIAN

Special to the Gazette

KALAMAZOO -- Glenny Cramer was riding his bike near a horse farm in Lawrence in 2002 when he was struck by a car. He was dragged for nearly 30 feet.

The impact broke the second, fourth, fifth and sixth vertebrae in his neck.

A construction worker, Cramer, 41, was unable to work to pay his medical bills. He tried to get disability payments to stay afloat financially but kept getting denied.

Eventually, he became homeless.

During the day he works on getting into training programs in hopes of getting a job. He spends his nights at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission.

"I'm a walking miracle. I should be paralyzed," he said. "I'm trying to put my life back together. Somehow, I just fell through the cracks."

Cramer was one of several homeless people who participated Thursday in a count of Kalamazoo County's homeless at Ministry with Community. The event, held in conjunction with counts at several other locations, included a survey that asked participants how they lost their housing, if they have a child or a disability and how long they've been homeless.

"This count takes them out of being in the realm of the anecdotal," said Ginger Hentz, a program officer for the Kalamazoo chapter of Local Initiatives Support Corp., which helps homeless people find permanent housing. "It puts a face on them."

The count is important, Hentz said, because it helps to raise awareness about homelessness and the factors that lead to it. It also aids area social-service agencies seeking state and federal funds for aiding the homeless.

Last year's count found 614 homeless people in Kalamazoo County. The 2008 total won't be available until March.

A total of 121,557 nights of lodging were provided in 2006 in homeless shelters in Kalamazoo County, a 45 percent increase since 2003.

This year's total will only capture those who participated in the one-day count. There are more homeless people in the county who chose not to participate in the count, and Cramer knows many of them.

Even when temperatures dip into single digits, many homeless people "cowboy it," he said, sleeping outside under bridges or in abandoned houses.

"They'll find a spot, build a fire and put on 15 blankets and snuggle together to stay warm," he said. "For whatever reason, they don't want to be known."

Wade Allen, who is homeless, stressed the need for more access to affordable housing.

He is one of the founding members of People United to Secure Housing, a group of about 30 that was formed in May. It is seeking to get more people who are living in shelters, on the streets or staying with others into homes of their own.

“It's easy to feel helpless when you are homeless,” said Allen, 24. “But getting someone off the streets and into a home can change so much. That should be our goal.”

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Michigan News

The Latest News, Updates, Photos, Videos and Opinions

Legal immigrants driver's license bills advance

by Tim Martin | The Associated Press

Thursday January 31, 2008, 9:28 PM

LANSING -- With businesses and universities urging quick action, a state Senate committee on Thursday took a step toward ending a policy that has at least temporarily banned some legal immigrants from getting driver's licenses in Michigan.

The Senate Transportation Committee approved bills that would let legal immigrants who aren't permanent residents get behind the wheel, sending the legislation to the full Senate. It was not immediately clear when the Senate might vote on the bills, but action could come as early as next week.

Learn More:

• [Details of legislation](#)

Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land stopped giving driver's licenses to illegal immigrants last week, responding to an opinion from Attorney General Mike Cox. Land interpreted the same opinion to mean those who are legally in the state but not permanent residents shouldn't get licenses, either.

People can continue to drive in Michigan as long as the driver's licenses from their home nations are valid, but once those expire, they would need a state-issued license. The policy applies only to first-time applicants for a Michigan license.

Land wants immigrants who are legally in the state to be able to get licenses, but said it will take a change in state law to allow it.

"We need to pass these bills soon," Land told lawmakers Thursday.

The legislation passed Thursday by the Senate committee deals broadly with stricter identification procedures aimed at complying with measures such as the federal Real ID Act. Many of those at the hearing, including some Democrats, want to separate the immediate issue of restoring driver's license rights to legal immigrants from the broader Real ID package.

Sen. John Gleason, a Democrat from Flushing, said after the committee hearing that Land overreached with her decision to deny licenses to legal immigrants. The result, he said, is unnecessary stress and confusion for legal immigrants living in the state and damage to Michigan's reputation.

Businesses and universities say some of their employees and students already are getting turned down when applying for Michigan driver's licenses.

Dennis Archer, former Detroit mayor and former chairman of the Detroit Regional Chamber, told lawmakers the current driver's license policy threatens relationships with Japanese companies and is worrying a company from India that is considering locating in Michigan.

"We need to fix this problem immediately," Archer said. "Every day that this is out there ... we lose opportunities for jobs."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm said Thursday there are nearly 400,000 foreign businesspeople, students and their families in Michigan on visas. Many of them are employed in the automotive industry. Doctors, researchers and several other types of workers are affected. So are universities trying to recruit international faculty and students.

Granholm is among those saying she agrees with provisions that deny illegal immigrants licenses. But she feels those here legally should be able to get a state-issued license.

"We will unite in making sure we send the right message, that we want to invite the world here and not close the world off," Granholm told a group of Detroit business leaders Thursday.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Those who serve meet people in need

'Connect' event at St. Patrick Parish in Brighton draws 315 residents

Friday, February 01, 2008

BY LISA CAROLIN

Those who needed help were matched with those who wanted to help at Livingston County's first Community Connect event last weekend.

More than 300 residents of Livingston County connected Jan. 26 with hundreds of volunteers from the community and from local service agencies at St. Patrick Parish Life Center in Brighton.

The county's first Community Connect was put on by the Livingston County Homeless Continuum of Care, which was awarded a \$1,000 grant for the event.

"We're trying to connect folks in the community with medical, housing, legal and employment services," said Alissa Parks, collaborative community planner for the Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body.

"We got volunteers and local agencies to convene in one place so that those residents with needs could receive direct help."

Donna Gehringer, allocations and assessments director for the Livingston County United Way, said 315 people attended.

"The feedback was so positive and we felt the event was very successful," said Gehringer. "Our committee will discuss making it an annual event."

Legal volunteers advised people on such matters as foreclosure, bankruptcy and divorce.

Elaine Brown, personal preventive health services director for the Livingston County Department of Public Health, said a number of people visited medical representatives for flu shots and blood pressure tests and with questions about everything from health insurance to dental care.

Cornerstone Church provided lunch as well as gift bags with toiletries, while Gleaners Community Food bank distributed food.

According to Parks, there are an average of 95 homeless people in Livingston County on any given day and 131 people in danger of becoming homeless.

The most recent figures from the U.S. Census show that 2,500 families in Livingston County live below the poverty level.

Lisa Carolin can be reached at lc Carolin@livingstoncommunitynews.com or at 810-844-2010.

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From: Colleen Steinman <steinmac@MICHIGAN.GOV>
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Michigan Department of Human Services Press Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Boitnott appointed Mason/Oceana County DHS director

Feb. 1, 2008

Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Ismael Ahmed announced today the appointment of Larry Boitnott of Otsego as director of the Mason/Oceana County DHS effective Feb. 11, 2008.

"Larry has demonstrated significant administrative skills and has extensive experience in assistance payments, contract management and volunteer services," Ahmed said. "I am confident that as director of the dual Mason/Oceana offices he will continue to provide quality leadership."

As Mason/Oceana DHS director, Boitnott will be responsible for the administration of federal cash assistance programs, as well as child and adult services including protective services, adoption services and foster care services.

Boitnott has been a DHS employee for 28 years and holds an associate's degree in business administration, accounting and computer science from Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac. He is married and the father of two grown children.

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs

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